

Booth Family

DRAWER 13A

John Wilkes Booth

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The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln

Booth Family

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

ARREST OF JUNIUS BRUTUS BOOTH. *Philadelphia, 26th.* Junius Brutus Booth was arrested in this city at 8 A. M. today and taken to Washington, where he is now confined in the Old Capitol prison. It is understood that his arrest was caused on suspicion of his knowledge of the intention of his brother to assassinate President Lincoln, based upon his letter to Wilkes, published in yesterday morning's papers, regarding Richmond and oil.

4/27/65

FROM NEW ORLEANS.

Excitement on the Death of President Lincoln.

Cairo, Ill., 26th. The steamer Olive Branch, from New Orleans 21st inst., passed up for St. Louis, with 35 bales of cotton and 619 rebel prisoners from Vicksburg.

Four men were killed on the day the news was received in New Orleans of the assassination of President Lincoln, for rejoicing over his death.

Flour was selling in New Orleans at \$8 50a \$8 75 for superfine.

The Memphis cotton market is dull and nominal; middling 23a24c net, buyers' price.

A Baton Rouge despatch of the 20th has been received. The news of the assassination of President Lincoln was received on the 19th, causing great excitement. Business was entirely suspended. Buildings were draped and general sorrow manifested. A large funeral procession took place on the 20th. Gen. Banks passed Baton Rouge on the 19th, for New Orleans.

THE ARREST OF JUNIUS BRUTUS BOOTH.

Philadelphia, 26th. The reporters of Forney's Press furnish the following particulars of the arrest of Junius Brutus Booth:

"He was arrested at his private residence in this city. The detectives had been on the *qui vive* for him for several days past. He was placed in a close carriage and driven to the Baltimore depot and taken on the first train to Washington city. The arrest, it is stated, was procured upon the evidence of certain documents in the possession of the United States authorities, an extract of which was published on Monday.

This extract alludes to the oil business as not likely to be profitable because Richmond has been captured and had surrendered. Those who are well acquainted with the chirography of the prisoner believe it to have been written by him. "Alice," who also concurs in the recommendation to the assassin to abandon the oil business, is said to be a woman who is intimately acquainted with the assassin.

The Ledger reporter says the rumor that Junius Brutus Booth was arrested here on Tuesday is not a fact. It is ascertained from relatives of his, that he visited New York, where his mother is represented as suffering from her son's misconduct. He was arrested at New York and taken to Washington.

EDWIN BOOTH'S ORDEAL.

His Arrest and Trip to Washington After Lincoln's Assassination.

Very few persons are aware of the fact that after John Wilkes Booth shot President Lincoln Edwin Booth was practically taken into custody by the agents of the Government. He was released as soon as an examination showed that he knew nothing of the conspiracy. This story of the affair is related by Ivory M. Blood:

"At that time, Mr. Booth resided on East Fourteenth street, near Broadway. I was in the United States secret service of the War Department, and had been detailed by Chief Baker to take Mr. Booth into custody. It was after the assassination of President Lincoln, and Mr. Booth's brother, John Wilkes Booth, the assassin, had been apprehended by Baker's men, and mortally wounded by Sergt. Boston Corbett, in Mr. Garrett's barn in Virginia.

"Secretary of War Stanton and Judge Advocate General Holt, under whose instructions I acted, wished to question Mr. Booth in regard to his knowledge, if any, of the movements and conversations of his brother, John Wilkes Booth. Upon my going to Mr. Booth's residence, the door bell was answered by a colored servant. I told him that I wished to see Mr. Booth. He went upstairs and upon returning said Mr. Booth wished to know if I would not tell him the nature of my business.

"No," I replied. "I must see him in person," and I sent up my card.

"The servant returned to Mr. Booth's room, and shortly afterward that gentleman came down and invited me into the parlor. I shall never forget his appearance. He was pale and haggard, greatly agitated and trembling from head to foot. He had apparently an intuition that something serious was to happen to him. When seated, I opened the conversation by saying to Mr. Booth:

"You see by my card that I am in the secret service, and am obliged to take you to Washington, D. C. if you wish to see any other authority I have my papers in my pocket.

"With a tremulous voice he replied: 'No. I do not care about seeing them.' Several times during our conversation he said: 'It is an awful thing.' 'It has distressed me greatly.' 'I feel as if I was going to die.' 'I can not understand why my brother did the terrible deed.'

"Mr. Booth wished to know if he could give bonds, and I replied in the negative. Then he asked if he could consult counsel, and I told him he could under the following conditions: That he must not leave my presence; that he could not have any conversation with any person, including his counsel, except in my hearing, and that all such conversation would be strictly confidential on my part, giving him as a reason that the habeas corpus act was then suspended, and that the Government did not allow any private conversation where parties were under arrest.

"Mr. Booth at the time had on his dressing gown. He returned to his room and came down wearing a black suit and silk hat, and said he was ready to accompany me to his lawyer on Wall street, whose name I do not at present recollect. Before leaving the house I said to him that I would not, as was customary, put the handcuffs on him, and that no one on the street would know that he was under arrest, adding: 'You can not get away from

me, because I am armed.

"I pledge myself as a gentleman," replied Mr. Booth, 'that I will not try to get away.'

"I asked him if he had a pistol, and he answered:

"I have not."

"The servant was dispatched for a carriage, and upon its arrival we were driven to the office of Mr. Booth's counsel, on Wall street. Mr. Booth asked me if there was much excitement in Washington, what I thought they would do with him, and if any one thought that he had any connection whatever with the tragedy.

"I would rather die than go to Washington," he said.

"I replied that I knew of no one who had intimated in the least that he had been in any way connected with the affair.

"On introducing me to his counsel he said to him:

"Mr. Blood will tell you his business with me."

"I told the lawyer that I was going to take Mr. Booth to Washington, by order of the Washington authorities.

"The lawyer declared that I had no right to take Mr. Booth from the city, and if there were any charges against him they ought to be tried by the United States court here.

"The Government has authority," I replied, 'to send any person to Washington, and Mr. Booth is not the first person that I have taken there.'

"I don't care what you have done with other people," the lawyer exclaimed in an angry tone, punctuated with an occasional oath. 'I am here to defend the rights of Mr. Booth.'

"No one objects to your doing that," I responded, 'but I shall obey the orders of the Government.'

"I want," continued the lawyer, 'to see Mr. Booth alone.'

"You can not do it," was my answer.

"What are the charges against, and what does the Government want with him?" asked the lawyer.

"To examine him as to when he saw his brother last, and if his brother had ever intimated to him anything about the assassination. The Government is not going to spare any pains or expense to get at the bottom facts of the affair."

"If I should set forth Mr. Booth's rights as a citizen, under the Constitution you could not take him to Washington," said the lawyer, with much asperity of language and a show of impudence in his manner.

"I replied that I would take Mr. Booth, and the lawyer, too, if he interfered with the orders of the Government, if it took all the soldiers at Governor's Island to do it.

"Well, Mr. Booth," said the irate counsel, turning to him as he sat in a chair in his office, without taking part whatever in the foregoing dialogue, 'you had better go with this man to Washington, and if you need my services you can telegraph me.'

"On being driven back to Mr. Booth's residence, luncheon was served to us, after which he changed his costume and had some things put into a satchel. We went in the carriage direct to Desbrosses street ferry and took a train for Washington.

"Upon arriving in Washington early the next morning I turned Mr. Booth over to Col. Baker, after we had breakfasted at an all-night restaurant, and after we had waited several hours at Willard's Hotel. He was put through a course of examination by Col. Baker and afterward taken before the Judge Advocate General. There were no discrepancies in his two statements. After he had been examined by the Judge Advocate General he was discharged. There was nothing whatever in his statements to show that he knew anything at all about his brother's terrible act before it had been perpetrated."

EDWIN BOOTH'S ORDEAL.

HIS TRIP TO WASHINGTON AFTER LINCOLN'S ASSASSINATION.

The Story of His Arrest Known to Few Persons—Ivory M. Blood Tells How He Took Him to Washington to Be Questioned About His Knowledge of the Crime

Very few persons are aware of the fact that after John Wilkes Booth shot President Lincoln Edwin Booth was practically taken into custody by agents of the Government. He was released as soon as an examination showed that he knew nothing of the conspiracy. This story of the affair is related by Ivory M. Blood:

"At that time, Mr. Booth resided on East Fourteenth street, near Broadway. I was in the United States secret service of the War Department, and had been detailed by Chief Baker to take Mr. Booth into custody. It was after the assassination of President Lincoln, and Mr. Booth's brother, John Wilkes Booth, the assassin, had been apprehended by Baker's men, and mortally wounded by Sergeant Boston Corbett, in Mr. Garrett's barn, in Virginia.

"Secretary of War Stanton and Judge Advocate-General Holt, under whose instructions I acted, wished to question Mr. Booth in regard to his knowledge, if any, of the movements and conversations of his brother, John Wilkes Booth. Upon my going to Mr. Booth's residence, the door bell was answered by a colored servant. I told him that I wished to see Mr. Booth. He went up stairs and upon returning said that Mr. Booth wished to know if I would not tell him the nature of my business.

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SINGULAR COINCIDENCE.

The Same Play by Salvini at the Same Theater
Booth Played When Lincoln Was Shot.

CINCINNATI, O., April 14.—A singular coincidence in connection with the appearance here of Alexander Salvini, who is playing D'Artagnan in "The Three Guardsmen" this week at the Pike Opera House, is that Junius Brutus Booth was playing the same part in the same play, at the same theater, twenty-seven years ago to-morrow night, when the news of the assassination of President Lincoln by John Wilkes Booth reached Cincinnati.

1852

Narrow Escape of Booth's Brother.

"One of the most exciting mobs I ever saw in my life was the one which attempted to hang Junius Brutus Booth at Cincinnati the morning after Lincoln's assassination."

Emile Buelier was the speaker. He made the remark in conversation with some friends last evening.

"I was then a clerk at the Burnet house," he continued. "I had gone there with Captain Silas Miller, who had purchased it just prior to that time. Junius Booth was billed to play there, and arrived at the hotel on the evening when his brother shot Lincoln."

"He came down stairs the next morning, and after breakfast was on the point of going out to take a stroll. I had just heard a few minutes before that the people were in a tumult, and had torn down his bills all over the city. He came up to the desk, and as he did so I informed him that I thought it would be best for him not to go out in the streets. He looked at me in astonishment, and asked what I meant. 'Hav'n't you heard the news?' said I. He replied that he had not. I didn't like to say any more, and he walked off, looking greatly puzzled. Going to a friend, who was standing near, he asked in rather an excited manner what that young man meant by talking that way, and wanted to know if I wasn't crazy. The man told him no, that I was the clerk. More mystified than ever he returned and demanded my reason for the remark. I saw then that he was in ignorance of the tragedy, and reluctantly informed him that his brother had killed the President. He was the most horrified man that I ever saw, and for the moment he was overcome with the shock. I suggested to him that it would be better to go to his room, and he did so, being accompanied by one or two of his friends."

"He had scarcely gone up-stairs before the room was filled with people. The mob was fully 500 in number, and wanted to find Booth. They were perfectly furious, and it was with the greatest difficulty that we checked them by the story that their intended victim had left the house. They would have hung him in a minute if they could have laid hands on him, so great was their rage. They returned almost immediately, but by this time we had removed Booth from his room to that of a friend. The mob watched the house so closely that it was four or five days before he had a chance to leave. We finally smuggled him away, however."

"I've seen four or five different accounts of that circumstance, but none of them were correct. The story that he was disguised as a woman to effect his escape is all wrong. He left in his ordinary clothing. — *Louisville Courier-Journal.*

Wilkes Booth and His Brother.

[Gen. Adam Badeau in McClure's Magazine.]

I saw much of him during the months of my convalescence, and early in 1865, when I was again taken to New York after an attack of camp fever, Wilkes Booth was once more at his brother's house. He was excessively handsome, even physically finer than Edwin, but less intellectual in his manliness. I never saw him on the stage, but under Edwin's roof I thought him very captivating, though not so thoroughly distinguished as his greater brother.

Two months later came the terrible event which plunged the nation, and especially the Booth family, into such awful sorrow. Edwin was playing in Boston, but at once gave up his engagement and returned to his home in New York. Numbers of the most eminent people hastened to assure him of their sympathy and their belief in his loyalty. He had indeed been stanch for the Union, and the only vote he ever cast was for Lincoln in 1864. But he was overwhelmed by this fresh misfortune, this new cloud that had settled on his house. His brother Junius and his brother-in-law were thrown into prison in Washington, and he felt himself an object of suspicion. I had returned to the field, and was in Richmond when the news reached me. I wrote to him at once, but my letter was withheld. All letters to him for awhile were kept back, and I suppose especially any from Richmond. I could not leave my post immediately, and it was a month or more before I reached New York, where I went, of course, direct to him. The first shock was over, but the old gloom was greater than ever.

He told me he had seen nothing in his brother to excite suspicion, and I have always believed that the awful act was the result of a disturbed brain. It was so theatrical in plan and performance; the conspiracy, the dagger, the selection of a theater, the brandishing of the weapon, the cry "*Sic Semper Tyrannis*" to the audience—all was exactly what a madman brought up in a theater might have been expected to conceive; a man, too, of this peculiar family, the son of Junius Brutus Booth, used all his life to acting tragedies.

BOOTHS, FATHER AND SONS.

Traits of Old Junius Brutus That Lived Again in the Murderer, John Wilkes.

CHICAGO, June 16.—Two or three weeks before the murder of President Lincoln I went to Washington from New York on my way to the army, and stopping in at the Metropolitan Hotel fell among some drinking gentlemen, and one of them was John Wilkes Booth, to whom I was then for the first and only time introduced. Booth had a way of drawing very close to you and talking to you with his eyes close and confidential, as a designing person talks to a woman he would ensnare. However, he was engaging and had magnetism. Reminding him of the many times I had seen him play in Philadelphia he kindled to my acquaintance, and we continued to smoke, tittle and converse, until it came my time to take the steamer down the Potomac River to Fortress Monroe. At that port, as I was returning from Richmond but a little while afterward, I was told that the President had been murdered by the great actor, Edwin Booth. I inferred that Wilkes Booth was the criminal and so expressed myself.

It is well known that Edwin Booth, with a costly remorse which did him honor, never played after the tragedy in Washington. I know of no similar evidence of the historical and moral quality in the history of the stage. Mr. Ford, the manager of the theater, announced its opening before the blood of Lincoln was well scoured from the floor, and this led Secretary Stanton to buy the theater, in order that the scene of Lincoln's murder might not become a variety show. The stage experienced a great political purification about that time, for a large proportion of its followers had been hisses at the Government. Before the war the stage had to contend in the North with the moral classes, while theatricals were comparatively strong all over the South. The assassin Booth was of a purely instinctive character, making much of the personal fidelities which are told in "Damon and Pygthias" and similar plays, and he had been so followed and petted in the South about the time the war commenced that he killed Mr. Lincoln as a souvenir of his fidelity to the Richmond people, using the motto of Virginia as he stalked across the stage in the instant of the murder.

Edwin Booth, according to my observation and conviction, was the best master on the American stage, and rather more of a man than any one upon it. He was stogy neither on nor off the stage. He inherited a disposition for drink and for moodiness, but overcame them both, and was as reliable in his entries and exits as his father was unreliable. Edwin Booth could not escape the cloud which hung over his father's nature, and which was partly moral and partly alcoholic. There is no doubt that the father Booth married in Belgium when a young actor, and that when he married the second time he had not been divorced, and therefore felt that he might come under the dominion of the law. There was always something lurking and hiding in old Booth. The story told by Macready and others of how he was discovered in the English provinces acting the slinking and revengeful persons, with his rich dark face and imitation of Edmund Kean's style, comes to mind as we recall his dark descendant. Sent for to come up to London and play against Kean at a rival theater, the greater actor invited him to come upon the same stage at once. But the moral nature of old Booth, as we call him, fell down at this frank condescension. It soon became apparent that he could not stand the

The audience saw, as the play proceeded, that Booth grew smaller and weaker, and Kean excelled himself. Next we hear of Booth playing off again in the provinces, and celebrating himself with inferiors, which was the method of his life. He took his family to a spot on the old high road between Baltimore and Philadelphia, where they were secluded by the woods from human intrusion, probably fearing that some one would come along who would detect the bigamist and expose him. The children had but a dim understanding of this and loved their mother. I have been in the little town of

Bellaire several times, where Booth came forward to try his father's profession in the town hall or court house.

I recollect Edwin Booth as far back as about 1857-58, when he was playing "The Fool's Revenge," and I think Mortimer in "The Iron Chest." There was something refinedly subtle about him in his youth. He had a manly head and a serious eye in it. He was fitted to become a noble actor by natural experience and suffering. The Northern public took him up as a man worth encouraging, and so he is buried in Boston, while he himself buried under a monument at Baltimore his father and his father's deceased children.

Taking to himself friends of nobler quality than his father would admit, Edwin Booth encouraged his own appreciation of the high parts he revealed. Acting must be in much mechanical, for the novice who would play with inspiration and restraint would soon throw out of tune the subordinate company. Acting, indeed, is more art than genius. Even Sarah Bernhardt, with all her apparent effervescence and frenzy, has measured every step of that small stage which she must pass as she carries the blood-stained dagger in her hand and seems to be Lady Macbeth, out of her mind, totally unprepared. It is horrible to think that so had John Wilkes Booth studied every step of the stage where he killed Lincoln; had probably practiced his leaping from the second story box, where he was to do the murder, and had rehearsed the half a dozen words he was to say in the presence of the audience. Here was a man who lived for the front of the house, while Edwin Booth, the brother, was very little seen among the haunts of men or picking up friendships in the barrooms. Yet Edwin Booth was companionable and simple in his intercourse. He had solicited life on the kindly side and it had responded to him cordially. He found high company, and Wilkes Booth found low company. The familiars around the stage, such as Spangler, the scene shifter, were to Wilkes Booth's liking.

Washington could have given Edwin Booth from \$5,000 to \$10,000, perhaps \$20,000, every year he lived, subsequent to the dastardly act of this brother, but with the feeling which Secretary Stanton had, that his brother had outraged hospitality, like Macbeth, and desecrated with the name of Booth the public capital, he refused for all the remainder of his life to wear his theater trappings or take toll at the theater gate in the city of Washington. You can compute at \$5,000 a year for twenty-five years how Edwin Booth sacrificed \$125,000 to the name, not of his brother, but of Mr. Lincoln, for whom he voted when Lincoln ran the second time for President. If he could have made \$10,000 a year out of Washington city, and I think it quite probable, he sacrificed \$250,000. It might be said over his grave, "Here lies an actor who would rather have reverence than money."

I found a person in Washington, Mr. Harbin, who met Booth in Virginia after he had crossed the river, and to whom he said many strange things, such as: "When I broke the bone in my leg I felt that I was going to swoon upon the stage, and I would have been captured right there if I had not been a very brave man. I kept my will and got away." The wretch, when he got to Surrattsville, could not restrain his braggart nature from calling to the drunken tavernkeeper there, "Do you want to hear some news? We have killed Lincoln and Seward, etc."

Thomas Harbin, who was the second person to enter into the conspiracy with Booth, the first having been Dr. Mudd, said to me:

"I have no doubt that at the time John Booth was under the influence of alcohol, and I think he was more or less drunk from the time he conceived the abduction of Lincoln down to his escape from the theater. It looks to me now like an alcoholic crime."

Booth came to Bryantown Catholic Church on a Sunday, and picked up Mudd, and Mudd went out and got Harbin, and these three were the original plotters in the second story of the mean looking tavern at Bryantown. Mr. Harbin told me that Spangler was fully in the job, to embarrass the stage by shifting his scenes and putting out the lights, etc. Yet, the secession tribe for years after that crime shouted that Spangler was a poor fellow who knew nothing of the deed beforehand. Mudd was the means of introducing Surratt to Booth and involving that silly family in the tragedy.

GEORGE ALFRED TOWNSEND.

It is not generally known that Edwin Booth once saved the life of Robert T. Lincoln, son of the martyred President. In 1876 John T. Ford, the Baltimore manager, had a traveling theatrical company in the South, of which Mr. Booth was the star.

At Bowling Green, Ky., it happened that Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Booth were waiting for a train. Neither was aware of the other's presence. Mr. Lincoln had strayed on a switching track. An engine came along, and he would have undoubtedly been struck and probably killed had not Mr. Booth, with a quick movement, pushed him out of harm's way.

Mr. Lincoln thanked his preserver warmly. Some time elapsed before he discovered the name of the man who had come to his rescue.

Booth the Physician.

A Younger Brother of the Tragedian Who Studied Medicine.

TO THE NEW YORK HERALD: Will you kindly tell me in what year the corner stone of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine was laid.

Did Edwin Booth, the actor, have a brother who was a doctor and in what year did he die? Mrs. C. H. W.

PHILADELPHIA, February 10.

The corner stone of the cathedral was laid in 1892.

William Winter in his biography of the late Edwin Booth refers to Joseph Adrian Booth, son of Junius Brutus Booth and brother of Edwin, Junius Brutus the second and John Wilkes Booth. He studied medicine but is said to have practiced only for a short time. The biography says that in 1893 Joseph Adrian Booth was the only surviving child of the elder Junius Brutus Booth.

New York Herald 2-17-23

1933

NOTES: The hundredth anniversary of Edwin Booth marked a great day in the history of the Booth House, once the residence of Junius Brutus Booth, in Bel Air, Md., where Edwin and his younger brother John Wilkes had seen the first light of this world. A comfortable lofty mansion about 150 years old, surrounded by 150 acres of forrest and fertile farmland. Excellently built, and untouched by the ravages of time. Fifty five years ago the husband of the present owner, Mrs. Mahony, purchased the estate from Mrs. Booth. Mrs. Mahony, a youthful lady of 81, devoted the past 30 years of her life to the study of the Booth family, to her collection of Booth Memorabilia and welcomes everybody who wishes to view the rooms, where the innocent little feet of John Wilkes trod the floors she proudly exhibits, where the Booth children played under the very trees that still add to the grandeur of the landscape. The collections in the fine old rooms are rather pathetic. Old bad newspaper prints, colored and other lithographs, furniture that looks queer enough and old enough, but hardly in character with the structure itself. There is a photostat of the touching letter Mrs. Booth wrote to President Johnson, asking his permission to transfer the body of unfortunate John to the family vault, the original having been purchased by Dr. Rosenbach (for 1000 Dollars as Mrs. Mahony informed us). But we forgave all the quasi antiques, even the cradle in the bedroom of Asia Booth, when Mrs. Mahony lead us to the balcony of the chief bedroom on the second floor opened the window, upon a matchless fall evening with fine white snow, like crystal powder, strewn on trees and grass, and exclaimed: "Here they practiced their "Romeo and Juliet" Balcony Scene, Asia on the balcony, Edwin beneath, right near the stump of the old tree, cut down about 40 years ago, and old Mrs. Booth seated in this little chair (pointing to an old fashioned folding chair) rehearsed the scene with her children. I have this story from her own lips."

Hens in the nearby henhouse started to cackle and Mrs. Mahony left us abruptly. We were touched; by the great evening in a placid world-forlorn spot, by the presence in spirit of the genius who had lived here, worked here and by the memory of John Wilkes. Here, in one of these rooms he had been born. Here he had watched the greatest family of actors at work. Here he absorbed the first taste of his future profession. We thought of the abominable Stanton, who abused Lincoln's trust in such a rascally way, of the tragedy that resulted from Stanton's cowardly actions..... Mrs. Mahony returned showing us triumphantly half a dozen eggs, the first ones her Leghorns had laid this season.

Once we had a magnificent collection of Booth letters (Edwin, Junius Brutus, John Wilkes) and some of the most important playbills of their career. They repose now in the collections of the late Mr. Henry Folger. However we have a few interesting playbills of the Booth family, which we are offering in this list.

We have not forgotten the 100th anniversary of the birth of E. Clarence Stedman, the Banker Poet. We are offering the first letter he ever wrote to Walt Whitman, whose friend he became; an enthusiastic letter of a young man, who combines with his enthusiasm the healthy instinct of acquisition, asking Whitman for one of his manuscripts. We are offering one of his best poems in manuscript and some of his letters of Poe interest, selected from the period of his editing a Collected Edition of Poe's Works.

FOR THE FIRST TIME we had the pleasure of seeing, purchasing and now owning a complete set of perhaps the finest bibliographical Journal ever printed and edited in these United States, "The Philobiblion" edited and printed by the scholar-bookseller George Philip Philes, who devoted his life to bibliographical studies and literary work of the same type in the early seventies and eighties. Our copy is in the original issues, as published. 1862-63. Printed on Japanese paper, as beautiful in appearance as precious in contents. At the same time we acquired that magnificent catalogue of the Odell Library (Bibliotheca Curiosa) prepared also by Mr. Philes, and one of a few copies, illuminated by hand, on large paper. You will look in vain for a listing of these items. We prefer the volumes to your money (for a little while anyhow). It is a great satisfaction to know that Mr. Philes published his Journal in war disturbed New York in his own book shop, in Nassau Street. His bibliographical story of AL ARAAF, then believed to be the first printed volume of Edgar A. Poe, is truly fine and noteworthy. E. B.

Booth

NIECE OF EDWIN BOOTH FOUND DEAD IN TENEMENT

Mrs. Marie Booth Douglas, 75, Dies
in New York Alone With 3 Cats

New York, March 11.—(AP)—Mrs. Marie Booth Douglas, 75-year-old former actress, who claimed relationship with Edwin Booth, was found dead yesterday in a cheap tenement.

Three cats, her only companions during the last six years, were by her bedside. On the rare occasions when she gossiped with others in the building she hinted at past stage triumphs. She was the niece of the great actor, Edwin Booth, and John Wilkes Booth, his brother, she said.

Police found in her trunks, amid finery of another day, letters which seemed to substantiate her story. The Actors Fund took charge of the body.

Descendant of Booth To Make Stage Debut

KEENE, N. H., June 26 (U. P.).—A great-granddaughter of John Wilkes Booth, actor who assassinated President Lincoln, makes her stage debut at a summer theatre here July 6.

Miss Rosamond Castle Page, 18, who studied at the Pittsburgh, Pa., playhouse last winter, will play the role of Betty Small in "The Sap." Her father, Mann Page, is a playwright; her mother, the author of several books and numerous short stories. They live in Hollywood.

1-21-37

LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY.

In line with, and bearing upon my theory that all humanity is united one way and another through an invisible skein, I turn backward thirty years to tie another knot.

December, 1908, Gutzon Borglum, the sculptor, loaned me a volume dealing with the life of Lincoln, an intensely interesting work in which the author drew an excellent picture of the President, taking much of his information from those associated in life with the martyr. From this book, I got the fairly well defined idea that not even a man's intimates see him clearly, or at least that no two of them see him alike. As a result, taking advantage of the fact that I was then editing several Munsey periodicals, I decided to round up such of Lincoln's former associates as were still among the living and ask them for particulars concerning the Great Emancipator.

For this assignment, requiring a trained journalistic pen, I selected Izola Forrester, one of Park Row's most intelligent and efficient go-getters. I supplied her with ten names of Lincoln's war and pre-war associates, with instruction to cover each without disclosing to the others her purpose.

What I wished more than anything else to reveal was that the individual appraisal, no matter how minute, would disclose such a wide variety of opinions that anything approximating a true picture of the deceased would be well nigh impossible. The penalty for passing out of this life is to be misrepresented and distorted in the next. Those called upon to jog their memories in the interest of biography unwittingly draw the long bow, guild the lily and offer posterity a more or less fictitious image, from which historians to come cull what best suits them in order to give their pre-conceptions substance.

Miss Forrester, devoting two weeks to the work in hand, turned out a seven-thousand-word masterpiece covering Mr. Lincoln during that important period extending over the last decade of his life up to and including his assassination at the hands of John Wilkes Booth in Ford's Theatre, and the dramatic aftermath.

Aside from presenting much material of general interest, focused by virtue of its sources, and the fact that the data emanated from living lips, the story proved beyond any possible doubt that after a lapse of forty years or more few men can be trusted to summon the past and present accurately the details associated with any particular event, no matter how important, or any individual, regardless of his celebrity.

Any attempt to co-ordinate one man's opinion or observation with that of another, would have completely disorganized the purpose of the symposium. Each contributor undoubtedly regarded his pen picture as a bright spotlight turned by a friendly hand on the real Lincoln; the last word in biographical excellence. Before going to press, as a precaution against error, Miss Forrester supplied each of the ten historians with a copy of that portion of the interview in which they were individually quoted. What each thought about the opinions of the other nine contemporaries is now of no importance.

1938

"I want you to know," said Miss Forrester, placing the manuscript on my desk, "that this has been the most important assignment in my life. I cannot tell you now all that it has meant to me, or to what it may lead." All that you asked for is here in these pages. But I must tell you that while gathering these interviews I turned up another story, that must remain a secret until such time as it can be substantiated by proofs not yet in my possession."

"When available, may I see it?"

"Certainly, if you are then editing a magazine, or else are in the book business. I shall fill a volume when the time comes. To you I am indebted for the idea, or perhaps I had better say the possession of the central fact upon which this autobiography, which it is to be, will hang."

"Will it be a long job?"

"Ten, fifteen, twenty years; perhaps more. Possibly never, if I don't locate the proofs. But from this day on, mixed in with my regular work, I shall be at work upon Izola Forrester's book. Wish me luck to get the truth, and the courage to write it."

Thirty years after this interview with Miss Forrester, during which interval whenever we met my invariable query was, "How's the book coming along?" only to learn that it was "Still on the ways," she walked into my office in The Sun Building. A wrapped book bulged under her arm.

During all the years I had known Izola Forrester I had never ceased to marvel at her wide-open, coal-black, steady eyes, never wavering once they found an object or a face to fix themselves upon. Eight children—her own—have looked into them.

"Thirty years ago you sent me on a Lincoln story," she began, her dark pupils expanding. "Among the men I interviewed was Provost Marshall General James R. O'Beirne, who told me that in the Garrett barn where the assassin of the President was run to cover, and said to have been shot down by Boston Corbett, three, not two men were hiding. . . . The third man, James Wilkes Booth, escaped, and died free. Here is the story of my life before and afterward; the story of my mother's life; of my life, of all my blood ties and marriage, connected with him."

On the jacket of the thick volume lying before me I read these startling lines: "This One Mad Act. The Unknown Story of John Wilkes Booth and His Family. By His Granddaughter, Izola Forrester."

"Had I known that you were kin to John Wilkes . . ."

". . . You would never have sent me to do the Lincoln story," broke in the author, "and I should not have learned of that third man in the blazing Garrett barn. It was destiny that I should know and that you should have been the instrument to open that door for me and fate that the biography of John Wilkes Booth, Lincoln's assassin, should be written by me, his granddaughter."

Without end is the invisible skein.

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J. Wilkes Booth's Kin Wed

KEENE, N. H., March 23 (UP).—David B. Putnam, twenty-five years old, Keene machinist, and the former Miss Rosamond Castle Page, great-granddaughter of John Wilkes Booth, Lincoln's assassin, are bound for Europe today on their wedding trip. They were married at the home of the bride's parents here Thursday, it was learned today. The nineteen-year-old bride, who has been residing in Hollywood, Calif., made her stage debut here last summer as Betty Small in "The Sap." She studied at the Pittsburgh Playhouse.

Daughter of Booth's Doctor
Asks State Find Her Job

BALTIMORE, March 16 (AP).—Mrs. Nettie Mudd Monroe, daughter of the doctor who set John Wilkes Booth's leg after the actor assassinated President Lincoln, today asked the state unemployment service to find her a job so she can finish a Civil war romance she has written. Mrs. Monroe, sitting on a sofa on which she said Booth lay while Dr. Samuel Mudd cared for his broken leg, explained her story was not "one of those made-up affairs," but actually happened.

LINCOLN'S ASSASSIN
WOUNDED IN ALBANY

Albany, Feb. 12 (AP) — A Lincoln's birthday accident in a theater here in 1861 nearly cost the life of the man who was to become the Civil War president's assassin four years later, an Albany man recalled today.

A dagger dropped by John Wilkes Booth as he fell on the stage of the old Gaiety theater cut a deep gash in the actor's arm, John Boos, superintendent of a public bath, asserted.

Boos has framed in his office a program of the theater, since burned, for Feb. 12, 1861, on which is a notation that Booth fell while playing Pescara in "The Apostate."

"Lincoln visited Albany just six days later, and Booth still was playing with his injured arm tied to his side," Boos said, adding that he did not know whether Lincoln saw Booth act here.

Men and Things

New Light on Career Of Lincoln's Assassin

THE man hunt for John Wilkes Booth was on 75 years ago today. President Lincoln had died a few minutes past 7 o'clock the morning of April 15, 1865. Already the assassin was known. Booth had escaped into his native Maryland. He lived eleven days, almost to the minute, after his victim.

For years the horror of Booth's crime shrouded all efforts to discover what manner of man he was. He was a fiend incarnate, a madman, a sot; no words were too execrating with which to brand him. For a time it extended to the whole Booth clan.

Gradually, as the tension lessened, persons who had known Wilkes dared to intimate, without in the slightest measure condoning his crime, that his early life had not been a series of fiendish acts that inevitably pointed to his final degradation.

Asia Booth Clarke, his elder sister, wrote a biography of her father, Junius Brutus Booth, and her brother, Edwin, in 1882, in which she sought to refute the stigma of illegitimacy cast on Junius Brutus' children. For many years her word was generally accepted.

Sister's Secret Memoir

Asia had also written a memoir of Wilkes, "Johnnie" to her and the rest of the family on The Farm at Belair, Maryland, 22 miles above Baltimore, where all of the Booth brood were born. But that she had locked—literally locked—between covers in manuscript form. Before she died she gave it to Margaret Farjeon, daughter of Joseph Jefferson, who in turn passed it on, still locked, to her daughter, Eleanor. She finally published it as "The Unlocked Book" a couple of years ago. It reveals nothing of Wilkes' crime, but it sheds a new and sisterly light on "Johnnie's" childhood, and helps to explain the fascination Wilkes had for his friends before his mad act placed him beyond the pale.

Francis Wilson, the comedian of "Erminie" fame, gave glimpses of this phase of Wilkes' character in his biography published in 1929. Otto Eisenschiml almost whitewashed Wilkes in his lurid, biased but, in a measure, occasionally factual story of "Why Was Lincoln Murdered?"

But none of these has caught the character of young Wilkes with such verisimilitude as has Stanley Kimmel in his history of "The Mad Booths of

Maryland," just published. And he, for the first time, seems to have hit upon the truth about the Booths. He, for instance, shows that all ten of Junius Brutus' children in Maryland were born "out of wedlock."

Tenth Child, Then Wedding

Wilkes was only the ninth child of Mary Ann Holmes, known as Mrs. Booth in Maryland. At that time the real Mrs. Booth was in England. In 1815 Junius Brutus had married Adelaide Delannoy, whom he had met in Brussels. By her he had one son, Richard. Then he deserted her for a Covent Garden flower girl, Mary Ann Holmes, with whom he fled to America.

Confirmation of this, Stanley Kimmel says, is in the arrival of Adelaide Booth in Baltimore in 1846, where she established residence and began suit for divorce, which was granted April 18, 1851. On May 10 of the same year, Junius Brutus Booth and Mary Ann Holmes were married. Their last child, Joseph, had been born more than eleven years before.

Among the lesser stigmas against the name of John Wilkes Booth was his status as an actor. Usually accepted as sufficient is William Winter's contemptuous dismissal of Wilkes as a bombastic ranter. But this estimate of Wilkes never seemed to fit with the latter's undoubted popularity.

Wilkes made his first appearance in this city at the old Arch Street Theater in 1857. He had come here to see his brother-in-law, John Sleeper Clarke, Asia's husband.

Beginner's Stage-Fright

In Philadelphia Clarke got Wilkes into Mrs. John Drew's company at the Arch street playhouse. He recognized his limitations, for he had himself billed as "J. Wilkes" without the Booth. It was just as well. His debut was disastrous.

The play was Hugo's "Lucretia Borgia." Wilkes' one line was "Madame, I am Petruchio Pandolfe." What he said on the stage was this:

"Madam, I am Pondolfio Pet—Pondolfio Pat—Pantuchio Ped—damn it! What am I?"

The audience shrieked with laughter, and Wilkes ignominiously departed.

On March 2, 1863, Wilkes, now boldly billed as "John Wilkes Booth," returned to the same theater as a star. Not only that, but braved a rival attraction of none other than the great Edwin Forrest himself, then playing at the newly opened Chestnut Street Theater just west of 12th street.

Forrest had John McCullough and Madam Ponisi in his support; Booth had Mrs. John Drew and Barton Hill.

For two weeks Booth played a repertoire of "Richard III," "The Marble Heart," "The Apostate," "Shylock," "The Robbers," "Hamlet," "Money" and, on Friday the 13th, matched Forrest as Macbeth. Booth also did Petruchio to Mrs. Drew's Katherine in a short version of "The Taming of the Shrew."

Forrest, then 57, did not play every night, and Booth was important enough for the tragedian to drop over to see. For this "young upstart" of 25 was actually taking Forrest's business away. Theater-goers seemed to prefer young Wilkes Booth to the aging Forrest. The critic of John W. Forney's "Philadelphia Press" had this to say of Wilkes' ability on the stage:—

"He is a good actor and may become a great one. His figure is slender but compact. He has a small, finely formed head, with cold, classic features, a bright eye and a face capable of great expression. He very much resembles his brother Edwin in tone and action.

Natural Genius

"Without Edwin's culture and grace, and without that glittering eye that gives so much life to his Iago and Pescara (in "The Apostate"), Wilkes has far more action, more life and, we are inclined to think, more natural genius.

"He does not play Richard III as well as Edwin, but he plays some parts of it in a manner we don't think Edwin can ever equal. His dying scene is a piece of acting few actors can rival, and is far above the capacity of Edwin."

Going into Wilkes' manner of playing Richard, the critic continues:

"He makes Richard a slinking, malignant cripple; so deformed as to be almost unpleasant to the eye; one who loved murder for murder's sake alone. . . . We know the custom to make Richard 'murder while he smiles.' But Booth disdains to smile. His look, from beginning to end, is demoniac. He dabbles in blood; sprinkles it on the stage after the murder of Henry; wipes his sword on his mantle—" and adds with delicious naivete—"a very vulgar and disgusting thing for a nobleman to do."

Kimmel thinks that Wilkes Booth's acting days were doomed by a failing voice; that he realized his vocal condition and this, as much as anything, caused him to turn to some single dramatic action to perpetuate his name. The abduction of Lincoln, which was his plan until a few days before the assassination, was the form this was to take.

That is the conclusion of Wilkes' portion of "The Mad Booths of Maryland." As a picture of Wilkes it uncovers many facts hitherto missed by historians. But it lacks the glow, the color, of those sections of Lloyd Lewis' "Myths After Lincoln" that concern Wilkes. Nowhere in Kimmel, for instance, can one find such burning lines as those Lewis pens to describe Wilkes at the execution of John Brown.

Colonel Robert E. Lee's regiment was drawn up around the scaffold. The trap was sprung. Then—

"In the hollow square of infantry a militiaman went fish-belly white. . . . He was John Wilkes Booth—a popinjay come to watch an eagle die."

ROBERT SENDERFER

New Light on the Booths

Many biographies of known personalities are merely a rehash of material already presented, sometimes done a little better, oftentimes not as well. "The Mad Booths of Maryland" by Stanley Kimmel very distinctly does not however come under the above category. "I do," cried Edwin Forrest, when John McCullough told him he did not believe the report that John Wilkes Booth had killed Lincoln. "I do. It's true. All those — — Booths are crazy." Thus does Edwin Forrest's impulsive declaration add verity to the title of the book.

Perhaps while he was writing it, some of Mr. Kimmel's neighbors heard strange sounds. These were not however bony spectres clattering over a tin roof, but the Booth family skeletons which he was dragging forth from their carefully guarded closets. They had to do partly with the several marriages of the Elder Booth, a circumstance that is said to have driven the Booths into seclusion long before the shadow of John Wilkes' crime fell upon them. Mr. Kimmel in writing about the several conspirators, doesn't hold to the belief that either Mrs. Surratt or Dr. Mudd were innocent of knowledge of the impending assassination. And John Wilkes Booth he describes as "an actor determined to steal the show", ignorant, utterly undisciplined, made for fame, but incapable of making himself worthy of it.

As a model of diligence and perseverance in research, Mr. Kimmel deserves more than a modicum of praise. The author's labors have been enormous. For newspaper notices and reviews of Booth's theatrical performances he remarks casually that he is indebted "to practically all librarians in the principal cities of the United States, several in England, and those of Honolulu, Sydney and Melbourne, Australia." He has studied Miss Helen Menken's collection of Booth letters, which was formerly the property of Asia Booth Clarke. He points out that the building at Belair known as Tudor Hall, which is often photographed as the birthplace of the Booths, was actually not occupied by them until 1853. He establishes Charleston, S. C., as the birthplace of Junius Brutus Booth, Jr., and shows that he died Sept. 17 (not 16), 1883. He cites earlier performances of Edwin Booth than those known to William Winter, and examines California historical records to show that Winter's statement that Edwin was called the "Fiery Star" because fire broke out in all the towns he played in California as soon as he had left them was more picturesque than accurate. He disposes of Daniel Frohman's saying ("Encore") that Edwin played Washington in February, 1884, by showing that Edwin was playing elsewhere all through that month. Izola Forrester's assertion ("This One Mad Act") that Wilkes married a Southern girl Jan. 9, 1859, seems ruled out by reference to an unpublished letter from Mrs. Booth which implies clearly that her son was unmarried at this time.

The Private Lives of the Very Public Booths

This Study of the Great Theatrical Family Reads Like an Historical Detective Story

THE MAD BOOTHS OF MARYLAND.

By Stanley Kimmel . . .
400 pp. . . . Indianapolis:
The Bobbs-Merrill Com-
pany . . . \$3.75.

Reviewed by
LLOYD LEWIS

Author of "Myths After Lincoln"

THIS history of the theatrical Booth family begins with a seduction, ends with a funeral that occurs amid catastrophe, and, in between, is punctuated with insanity, pistol shots, drunken capers, thunderous dramatic premieres, illegal marital unions, back-stage quarrels and other vital statistics.

It may be history, but it is just what fundamentalist hillbillies have been telling us all along about play actors, and if William Jennings Bryan could have used this biography as a text, he would have had Broadway closed within a week and constables whipping actors clear across into New Jersey.

The author, with great industry, unearthed an astonishing amount of detail about the most noted of the nineteenth-century stage families, the family which began with Junius Brutus Booth and ended with his son Edwin.

As a "keyhole" job, ferreting out the scandals in the whole eccentric family. Mr. Kimmel's work entitles him to a bow from all detectives past and present. But it also entitles him to a bow from the historians, for three of the Booths were historic figures. Junius Brutus sr. started the classic stage in America, John Wilkes murdered Abraham Lincoln and Edwin was the first American actor to give our stage international distinction. All possible information upon those three men, father and two sons, is wanted by the historians, and so, with the students pleased and the curious excited, Mr. Kimmel's book should be a success.

Coming so close upon the heels of Carl Sandburg's mountainous history of Lincoln, Mr. Kimmel's F. B. I. investigation of John Wilkes Booth would seem to be the most convincing of all his reports. This investigation uncovers a host of new anecdotes about the assassin, and, as a whole, confirms the general historical opinion that J. Wilkes shot Lincoln as a device for capturing the celebrity he could not gain on the stage. What Mr. Kimmel establishes, however, is that J. Wilkes was considerably more of an actor than has been recently thought possible. Records of his popular success are produced in plenty. It was the artistic superiority of his brother

Edwin that thwarted J. Wilkes's vainglorious dreams, and then, adds Mr. Kimmel, there was that strain of lunacy boiling in the Booth blood.

John Wilkes Booth's hamminess (to use an exceptionally descriptive word from stage life) has never been so factually established as by Mr. Kimmel, who shows him mouthing

None of the many pretenders, he points out, ever had "J. W. B." tattooed upon their hands.

The newest body of material in the book is that dealing with the marital affairs of the family. What have heretofore been only hints and legends now become detailed accounts of the elder Booth's desertion of a wife and child in England, and



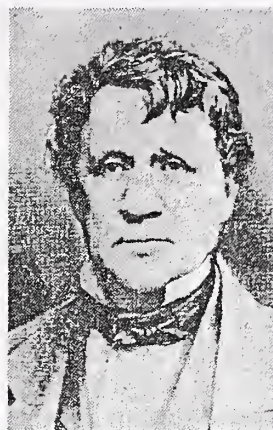
Edwin Thomas Booth and John Wilkes Booth
Photographs from "The Mad Booths of Maryland"

fiery praise of the Confederacy, but never enlisting under the Bonny Blue Flag. Kimmel does clear up the story that Booth, down South early in the war, shot himself in the foot so that he couldn't be drafted. The real story seems to have been that the star was accidentally shot in the buttocks backstage by his press agent.

Lincoln students will be interested in Mr. Kimmel's decision that all the historical laments about the improper guarding of Lincoln at Ford's Theater on the fatal night, are vain and beside the point. John Wilkes Booth was so expert a pistol shot that he could have shot Lincoln from the wings as well as the box, and, since he had the run of the theater, could have pulled off his job no matter if Gen. Grant, Parker, the lazy guard, and a whole company of Union soldiers had been guarding the President.

Less conclusive, but still very interesting, is the author's conclusion that Booth was not killed, in the burning Virginia barn, by Boston Corbett, as that mad sergeant and the country believed, but that the fugitive committed suicide rather than surrender.

Mr. Kimmel agrees with the most thorough historians that there is no basis for the tales of Booth's escape.



The Elder Booth and Junius Brutus Jr.

eventually married their mother and gave them a right to the Booth name comes to the reader with a positive sense of elation, for the Booths, excluding J. Wilkes and Asia, were an engaging lot, for all their moodiness. Great talent was in them, and they, as performers, electrified the public. Even Junius Brutus jr., who was only so-so as an actor, was a great success as a manager and producer.

Edwin's famous melancholy amid his triumphs is found to have been partly inherited from his mad father, partly traceable to his own lack of education, his weakness for liquor (he seems to have been a diligent toss-pot in his youth) his shame over John Wilkes's crime, and his pain at the hands of his second wife during her years of derangement.

That all this helped make him the ideal "Hamlet" is obvious.

Histories, before this, have been bright with the incredible antics of Edwin's father, bow-legged, broken-nosed old Junius Brutus sr., but none have ever recited so many of his drunken eccentricities and explained so much of his life both in the theater and in the home.

It is the private lives of these noted actors, rather than their public achievements, that Mr. Kimmel understands best, and, although he drags forth family skeletons with vast energy, never once does he leer while he works. His industry has produced a source book that will be standing a long time on the shelves of students of both the theater and Mr. Lincoln.

*Assassination
file*

///// 20707

January 31, 1982

Dr. Marcus Cunliffe
History Department
George Washington University
Washington, D. C. 20006

Dear Dr. Cunliffe:

I recently wrote Mark Neely in Fort Wayne to ask him if he knew who, among his British acquaintances, might be knowledgeable on the assassination aspects of President Lincoln's death, and he suggests that you might lend me a hand by furnishing a name and address. (He also refers to me and my associates as assassination moles, so it will be rather appropriate if you receive this on ground-hog day.)

Here are some of the things that the topnotch writers like Stanley Kimmel, Theodore Roscoe, and George S. Bryan apparently thought not worth running to ground, and the questions I raise are the ones I need help in obtaining answers to.

John Sleeper Clarke (1833-1899), Asia Booth's husband, was an actor of note. "In 1889 he retired and spent the last 10 years of his life in leisure near London," but no source consulted tells where he died or where he is buried. There are indications that his marriage, especially before his wife's death in 1888, was not a happy one. If there is an actors' section in Southhampton Cemetery (wherever that is), Sleeper may be sleeping there because that's where his close friend Edward A. Southern is buried.

Asia Booth Clarke (1835-1888), who died "at her home at Bourne-mouth England, May 16," was almost certainly a convert to Catholicism, but we should like to confirm this assumption. Father J. A. Gallen of St. Vincent's Church in the old section of Baltimore conducted her graveside services,, which were attended by her husband and just one of her several children. A newspaper write-up giving the details of Asia's final hours and the religious services extended in England would probably tell us all we want to know about this beautiful and talented woman.

Henry Byron Booth, age 12, died while his (unmarried) parents were in England in 1836. The books say he was buried in the churchyard at Pentonville (wherever that is), under a monument bearing a quotation from Southey. Date of his death and any newspaper publicity are wanted here also. (Stanley Kimmel, the best biographer of the Booths, has it that Junius Brutus Booth's legal wife and legitimate son living in

Dr. Cunliffe

- 2 -

England and Belgium were unaware of the existence of his American family. If the death of this son of the noted tragedian was publicized in 1836, such information would almost certainly have been imparted to the legal wife, deflating Mr. Kimmel's rather unbelievable premise.)

While Edwin Booth was in England in 1861-1862, he attended the funeral of his grandmother Holmes. This grandmother lived in Reading, and Edwin's youngest brother just missed seeing the old soul alive when he arrived to visit Edwin the latter part of May 1862. Edwin, like Junius Brutus, his father, was a stage celebrity, and his attendance at the funeral services may have been written up in a daily or theatrical publication. We are curious as to the grandmother's full name, who her survivors were, whether Edwin placed a monument on her grave site, etc.

I might mention, Dr. Cunliffe, that a letter of inquiry I wrote to a member of the London Civil War Roundtable brought back a reply that was quite depressing. This correspondent expressed admiration for and a belief in the accuracy of the Sunn-Schick The Lincoln Conspiracy published in 1977. As you probably know, that outrageous account had John Wilkes Booth cavorting all over the globe subsequent to his being killed once and buried three times.

Trusting that I am not imposing upon your good nature, I am

Sincerely yours

John Brennan

Assassination Mole

JOHN C. BRENNAN

Jan. 31, 1982

Dear Mark:

Thanks for suggesting Dr. Cunliff's name. I'll keep you informed, whether you want to be or not.

Certainly SOMEONE in perfidious Albion has done the kind of research we molesters of history enthuse over (and under).

Cordially, *John*

F

Booth cast himself in role

Q. Why did John Wilkes Booth shoot Lincoln?

A. Here we go again! The last time we wrote an assassination item we were almost run out of the country for making the goofy assertion that Oswald indeed probably shot Kennedy (this is now known as the "lone nut" hypothesis, because you have to be a nut, living alone, subsisting on canned food and hearing strange voices in your head, to believe Oswald was connected to the military coup that toppled JFK).

What makes the conspiracy theories about the Lincoln assassination unusual is that he was, in fact, killed in a conspiracy. John Wilkes Booth and his cohorts had plotted to kidnap Lincoln from his carriage and take him to Confederate territory. That plan was aborted, and Booth decided to try something nastier. At about the same time that Booth shot Lincoln at Ford's Theater, another conspirator knifed Secretary of State William Seward. (Trivia question: Who was sharing the presidential box that night with the Lincolns, and what were their fates? Answer below.)

So it wasn't an Oswald-type situation.



**Joel
Achenbach**
*Why
Things Are*

But how far did the conspiracy go? The evidence indicates that Booth was the ringleader and financier of his band of conspirators and that Booth alone masterminded the events of April 14, 1865. But there are some more interesting theories floating around, including the recurring contention that the assassination was ordered by Secretary

of War Edwin Stanton. The U.S. government tried to link the murder to Jefferson Davis, president of the Confederacy.

But these larger conspiracies are wispy things, no more solid than a hologram. The assassination of Lincoln made little military or political sense. Robert E. Lee had surrendered five days earlier at Appomattox. So why did Booth do it?

Here's a thought: Actors, like all creative

Nonfiction

Tragic subplots

The Booth family and Abraham Lincoln's assassination

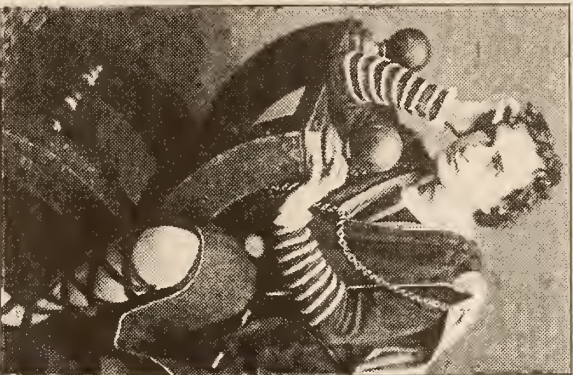
American Gothic:
The Story of America's Legendary
Theatrical Family—Junius, Edwin, and
John Wilkes Booth
By Gene Smith
Simon & Schuster, 286 pages, \$23
Reviewed by Patrick T. Reardon
A Tribune reporter

It was an interlude, like the pause in a play to build suspense for the final act.

The handsome, 26-year-old guest at Richard Garrett's Virginia farm "arose and went downstairs and out onto the lawn, where all morning he lay under an apple tree. The weather had turned warm and sunny. Apple blossoms drifted down on him, and he seemed to enjoy it, never brushing them off.

"The children of the house grouped around him. . . . He gave them a humorously done nonsense story about a man who decided to commit suicide by jumping off the U.S. Capitol but changed his mind in midair and by flapping his hands and pedaling his feet got back to safety."

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The famous Edwin Booth (left) in the role of Hamlet, and his brother John Wilkes Booth (right), who assassinated President Lincoln.

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iting a friend.

Booth's assassination of Lincoln has been attributed to madness and to politics. But Smith, agreeing with Adam Badeau, a friend of Edwin's and a high-ranking aide to Gen. U.S. Grant, sees something deeper, more complex, at work:

"To Badeau, . . . it had to do with the fact that John Wilkes Booth was an actor, of a family of actors; it had to do with his family and the family troubles that characterized Shakespeare's plays in which he and his family had appeared, what weighed down Romeo, Hamlet, Lear: love, hatred, death, bastardy, murder, great passions.

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And so was the end. In the early morning hours of April 26, 1865, the man who had rested on the lawn under the fall of apple blossoms found himself surrounded by a troop of soldiers seeking his capture. He was inside the Garrett barn and refused to come out. The barn was set afire.

One of the soldiers, Smith writes, "cautiously inched open the door to see drawn up to full height [Booth] with his hat off, with wavy dark hair tossed back

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also

FUN & GAMES

Booth cast himself in role of Lincoln's assassin

Q. Why did John Wilkes Booth shoot Lincoln?

A. Here we go again! The last time we wrote an assassination item we were almost run out of the country for making the goofy assertion that Oswald indeed probably shot Kennedy (this is now known as the "lone nut" hypothesis, because you have to be a nut, living alone, subsisting on canned food and hearing strange voices in your head, to believe Oswald was connected to the military coup that toppled JFK).

What makes the conspiracy theories about the Lincoln assassination unusual is that he was, in fact, killed in a conspiracy. John Wilkes Booth and his cohorts had plotted to kidnap Lincoln from his carriage and take him to Confederate territory. That plan was aborted, and Booth decided to try something nastier. At about the same time that Booth shot Lincoln at Ford's Theater, another conspirator knifed Secretary of State William Seward. (Trivia question: Who was sharing the presidential box that night with the Lincolns, and what were their fates? Answer below.)

So it wasn't an Oswald-type situation.



Joel Achenbach
Why Things Are

of War Edwin Stanton. The U.S. government tried to link the murder to Jefferson Davis, president of the Confederacy.

But these larger conspiracies are wispy things, no more solid than a hologram. The assassination of Lincoln made little military or political sense. Robert E. Lee had surrendered five days earlier at Appomattox. So why did Booth do it?

Here's a thought: Actors, like all creative

people, tend to be egomaniacs. Acclaim is like cocaine, you get a little bit and you want a lot. John Wilkes Booth was one of the most successful actors in the country. His father and brother were famous actors, too. He was handsome, smart, friendly. Yet he craved something more: Fame and glory that would survive the ages.

The murder of Lincoln may have been nothing more than an act of Shakespearean drama, a bit of plagiarism of "Julius Caesar." Booth didn't just shoot and run; he jumped onto the stage and shouted "sic semper tyrannis" — thus always to tyrants.

John wrote for himself in a crazed moment a part in a play that no playwright could have improved upon. He did it in a theater. It's not a coincidence. He shoots Lincoln, he jumps down upon the stage," argues Gene Smith, author of "American Gothic," a biography of the Booth family.

"It was an actor's dream . . . a starring role such as no actor before had ever had and none has had since."

Booth's own writings show his dramatic and narcissistic nature. The day of the assassination he wrote in his journal: "April

14, Friday, the Ides: . . . something decisive and great must be done. . . . Our country owed all her troubles to him, and God simply made me the instrument of his punishment."

Indeed, Booth was shocked to find that even in the South, to where he had fled, he was seen as "a common cutthroat," as he wrote in his journal.

"With every man's hand against me, I am here in despair. And why? For doing what Brutus was honored for."

Even his death — shot through the neck on the porch of a burning tobacco barn — was theatrical. He asked with his dying breath to see his paralyzed hands. "Useless, useless," he said, and died. His infamy will survive the ages.

(Trivia answer: Maj. Henry Rathbone and his fiancée, Clara Harris. Rathbone was knifed by Booth. Rathbone and Harris later married, but Rathbone, who always felt guilty for not saving the president, one day shot his wife to death and turned a knife on himself. He survived but lived out his years in a madhouse.) **S**

Washington Post Writers Group

Nonfiction

Tragic subplots

The Booth family and Abraham Lincoln's assassination

American Gothic:
The story of America's Legendary
Theatrical Family—Junius, Edwin, and
John Wilkes Booth
By Gene Smith
Simon & Schuster, 286 pages, \$23
Reviewed by Patrick T. Readoran
A Tribune reporter



The famous Edwin Booth (left) in the role of Hamlet, and his brother John Wilkes Booth (right), who assassinated President Lincoln.

It was an interlude, like the pause in a play to build suspense for the final act.

The handsome, 26-year-old guest at Richard Garrett's Virginia farm "arose and went downstairs and out onto the lawn, where all morning he lay under an apple tree. The weather had turned warm and sunny. Apple blossoms drifted down on him, and he seemed to enjoy it, never brushing them off.

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The date was April 25, 1865. Eleven days earlier, during a performance of "Our American Cousin" at Ford's Theatre in Washington, an assassin had quietly entered a box overlooking the stage and, from a distance of about two and a half feet, fired a large, round derringer bullet into the skull and brain of Abraham Lincoln.

The assassin was the son of one of the greatest actors of the era, and the brother of the man who, having just finished an unprecedented run of 100 performances as Hamlet in New York City, had been dubbed the Prince of Players. The assassin was the man on the lawn under the gentle fall of apple blossoms, John Wilkes Booth.

Unlike the presidential killers who would follow him in the nation's history, Booth was no stranger to the American public or, for that matter, to Lincoln, as Gene Smith makes clear in his vivid and evocative family portrait, "American Gothic."

He was an actor of high ability and great comeliness. Lincoln had admired his skill and wanted to meet him, but Booth refused. Born in Maryland, a Northern state with strong Southern sympathies, Booth saw himself as a man of the Confederacy even though he spent the Civil War on the stage in the North rather than in battle on behalf of the Confederacy.

In those war years, Booth was a bit player on the Washington scene, well-known but peripheral to the main event. Another such figure was Lucy Lambert Hale, daughter of a U.S. senator from New Hampshire. Lucy, although described by contemporaries as "stout," was a woman of apparently great attraction, able to count among her beaux Oliver

Wendell Holmes Jr., later U.S. Supreme Court justice; John Hay, one of Lincoln's two principal secretaries and later U.S. secretary of state; Robert Todd Lincoln, the president's son; and Booth, her fiancé.

It was with Booth that she attended Lincoln's second inaugural ball earlier that year, and it was to Booth that she had given a ticket to stand, earlier on Inauguration Day, on the platform in front of the Capitol building as Lincoln was sworn in to office.

"What a splendid chance I had to kill the President!" Booth told a companion later. But, he was asked, what good would that do? "John replied that if he did it his name would live in history." And so it has.

The act and infamy of John Wilkes Booth have overshadowed the distinguished careers and convoluted (even for actors) lives of his father, Junius Brutus Booth, and his brother, Edwin Booth.

Both these men, in their ways, were larger than life and not a little mad. And, in "American Gothic," Smith is at pains to tell their stories. But their lives can't be anything more than subplots to the great tragedy wrought by the son and brother who killed Lincoln.

There is something Shakespearean about the ways Booth treated Junius and Edwin Booth, something Shakespearean, too, in the way insanity wove its strands through the Booth family and around many of the major characters of the Lincoln drama, including Mary Todd Lincoln and, in his bouts of deep depression, her husband.

The lives of the Booths and the Lincolns were filled with the stuff of high drama, and Smith plays this to the hilt. He notices, for instance, how coincidences linked the families. When Robert Todd Lincoln fell in front of a train wheel in Jersey City, the man who pulled him to safety was

Edwin Booth. When the fatally wounded Lincoln was brought out of Ford's Theatre and into a boarding house across the street, he was put in a bed where, months earlier, John Wilkes Booth had fallen asleep while vis-

iting a friend.

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